

August 27, 1999

## MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA SOFTWARE MANDATE

**1. PURPOSE:** This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) directive provides policy and guidance on the installation and implementation of the Military Sexual Trauma Software. Implementation of the Military Sexual Trauma Software will be via the Veterans Health Information Systems Technology Architecture (VISTA) Version 1.0.

### 2. BACKGROUND

a. VHA Directive 10-95-030, Sexual Trauma Counseling, Care and Services, dated March 21, 1995, states that VHA may provide appropriate care and counseling to veterans determined to have been a victim of physical assault of a sexual nature, battery of a sexual nature, or sexual harassment while the veteran was serving on active duty. VHA Directive 98-058, Extension of VA's Authority to Provide Counseling Services and Treatment for Sexual Trauma, dated December 17, 1998, extends the treatment time through December 31, 2001.

b. Improving VHA's health data is a high priority that is in concert with the Women Veterans Health Program as a Special Emphasis Program. A recommendation was made by the Office of Inspector General (OIG) that treatment for sexual trauma be tracked and documented. It is important that all providers, in both Primary Care and Behavioral Health, screen for military sexual trauma.

c. Patches DG\*5.3\*195 and SD\*5.3\*150 have been developed in support of Sexual Trauma Counseling and Services initiative. The purpose of the Military Sexual Trauma software is to provide functionality to capture patient specific information related to military sexual trauma. The software changes in DG\*5.3\*195 and SD\*5.3\*150 provide the following functionality, the ability to:

- (1) Indicate a veteran's claim of military sexual trauma.
- (2) Indicate if a veteran's treatment is related to military sexual trauma.
- (3) Generate statistical and demographic reports related to military sexual trauma.

**3. POLICY:** It is VHA policy to provide a nationwide tracking system to ensure that consistent data is maintained on treatment of victims of military sexual trauma.

### 4. ACTION

a. All VHA facilities shall install the Military Sexual Trauma software application and/or patches. This application was released in March 1999. The software must be implemented immediately upon installation.

b. Each VHA facility Director shall facilitate the implementation by appointing a multidisciplinary Implementation Support Team (IST) to oversee the effective use of this software. It is recommended that the Women Veterans' Coordinator, an Automated Data

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Processing Application Coordinator (ADPAC) and Information Resource Management (IRM) support person, and providers of sexual trauma counseling be included on this team.

***NOTE:** The sensitivity of these counseling services and required confidentiality necessitates a high degree of professionalism and diligence in the appropriate use of this software. Work procedures, such as data entry, require close coordination to ensure the maximum protection of consumers, coupled with mandated data collection.*

**5. REFERENCE:** VHA Directive 98-051, dated November 19, 1998

**6. FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITY:** The Director, Women Veterans Health Program (133) is responsible for the contents of this Directive.

**7. RESCISSION:** This VHA Directive expires August 30, 2004.

Thomas L. Garthwaite, M.D.  
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